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MAKING THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL NEW

ERNEST ALBERT MILLER



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MAKING THE OLD SUNDAY SCHOOL NEW

BY
ERNEST ALBERT MILLER



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I

THE OLD SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE NEW

ALL adults to-day who attended Sunday school when they were children, and still continue, are aware of a great change in Sunday school conceptions and convictions. Then a Sunday school was supposed to be almost entirely outside the realm of educational law: some miraculous power was supposed to be present and active because it was God's school; the very fact that God's Word was studied, and songs of Zion sung, and fervent prayers offered, was considered sufficient guarantee against failure: its high purpose would justify and sanctify any means whatsoever. But in later years attention has been turned to the product and the results of Sunday

school work: neither quantitatively nor qualitatively have these been gratifying. From our schools more pupils have gone unchristianized, severing all church connections, than have remained in the church as witnesses for Christ. And of those who have affiliated with the church many have been indifferent Christians; few trained and competent Christian workers.

The implication here is not that former Sunday schools have nothing to their credit. The Christian world today would be infinitely poorer than it is had there been no Sunday schools in past generations. The Sunday school has always been the chief feeder of the Church. Had there been no old Sunday school there would be no new. Sunday school life and progress represents a great evolution, the beginning and earlier stages essential to any present-day efficiency. But the claims here are that the Sunday school has improved very slowly, that there has been too

much complacency amongst Sunday school workers in the past, that educational laws have been too much disregarded, that the Christian results might have been greater with more intelligent organization and methods, that the time has come for the Sunday school to awaken to the best in educational science and attempt great things for God.

Every clear-headed student of Sunday school history and Sunday school life to-day has arrived at the conclusion that the Sunday school must conform to the laws of teaching if it is to work out its purpose. Educational organization and methods are as essential for evangelistic results as for purely educational results. The laws of the mind are God's laws and cannot be broken without loss: when we are engaged in God's business most specifically, as in Sunday school, there is the greatest need of closest conformity to his laws.

The state has been vastly more pro-

gressive in the science and art of education than has the church. Indeed, the new Sunday school in many ways is an imitation of the public school. Department organization, Graded Lessons, trained teachers—these at least have been suggested by public school example. It is but fair to say that now, since religious educators have adopted the educational-evangelistic platform, Sunday schools are even outstripping the state schools in some respects, most notably in expressional work.

The determining principle in all educational advancement, and the principle that is operating with telling effect in the Sunday school world to-day, is that of the centrality of the child. Schools are on account of and for the sake of the children. Their interests should suggest and control all school management and all methods of instruction. The new Sunday school is fast superseding the old because it recognizes this principle of the primacy of the pupils. Old

Sunday schools crowned variously the superintendent, the teacher, or the Bible lesson: new Sunday schools are ordered for the children, their successively unfolding interests and fullest Christian development dictating organization, plans, and methods. To make every pupil a serviceable Christian is the aim of the new Sunday school.

While many Sunday school leaders are awake to a changed Sunday school viewpoint, and believe thoroughly in the new Sunday school, great numbers of these are helpless to make the change. To break up an old system and institute a new, when eternal destinies are at stake, is not a task to be undertaken carelessly by untrained hands. That many superintendents and pastors are eager to come to the front with their schools I have no doubt: but I am just as sure that these same leaders are conscientious enough to remain as they are rather than to take a leap in the dark. To help all progressive-thinking but

untrained and fearful Sunday school folk this book is written. Many books have been written on the new Sunday school, but, so far as I know, none definitely on the work of transforming an old school into a new—where to begin and how to proceed. The setting forth of that process is the purpose of this little book.

II

THE ENLARGED SUNDAY SCHOOL OBJECTIVE

THE plowman sets his stakes before striking out a new land. The Sunday school man, resolved on a newer and a better school, must definitely determine the ultimate goal before he tears up any ground. The final objective of Sunday school work is the only adequate touchstone of all methods, all organization, and all goals by the way. The first move for any earnest Sunday school leader, one who is truly conscious of great Sunday school changes all about him, one who is honestly concerned to bring his school up to the highest point of modern efficiency, is not to move at all; it is, rather, to sit quietly down and contemplate ends, especially the highest and ultimate ends. Sunday school im-

provement does not begin with a method, but with an ideal. Set your stake and then strike out.

One of the troubles with the old Sunday school was that those who managed it had no clearly defined objective. They were well-meaning men, but they did not look far enough into the future; they were content with close-up aims. If you had asked them what they were driving at, they would have replied that their purpose was a spiritual one, that the salvation of the boys and girls was their aim. These are vague expressions, and their vagueness is indicative of the dimness of the ideal of many former Sunday school workers. It may be that to some the planting of the Bible in the hearts and minds of the pupils was the chief function of the Sunday school. But one does not have to think long before concluding that Bible knowledge is just a method, a means, or at best, a lesser aim. What is the final justification of this school on Sunday?

No fair-minded Christian will deny that the Sunday school is a spiritual institution, that the inspired Word of God is the main text for study. The new Sunday school is at one with the old in these matters. But the new Sunday school spirit requires a clear distinction of means from ends, of half-way objectives from the ultimate. The final objective of the Sunday school to-day must stand out in clear light: the air must be cleared of all fog, the Sunday school machine must be sharply focused, the bull's eye must be held in steady vision while plans and methods are being settled upon. What is the objective worthy of a twentieth-century institution building character for God? A controlling sense of Christian citizenship (with the supreme emphasis on *Christian*) in the world—to develop this in the heart of every pupil is the true aim of Sunday school endeavor. This sense cannot be fully developed in a year, and does not take possession of the

soul in its fullness before maturity. But if it is ever going to grip the life of the man, it must be worked into the unfolding life of the boy. It is impossible to make a genuine altruist out of a man: he must be grown through the formative years.

The ideal of world-Christian citizenship does not detract from the individual Christian life, nor from the sense of community Christian citizenship. The earlier Sunday school objective of the regenerated individual life was good as far as it went, but it did not go far enough. The service ideal is more Christlike than the self ideal. There is no denying that one must have Christ in his heart before he can be a true servant of men, but it is just as true that Christ secures his fullest entrance into the life through the avenue of service, and that the self-centered Christian life is far from an ideal life. The ideals of a satisfactory individual Christian life, a community Christian citizenship sense,

and a world Christian citizenship feeling, develop together, and strongly reciprocate one another. The better foreign missionary one is, the better home missionary and the better Christian.

But Christian citizenship in the world is the finest and truest objective in religious education. If we can see young men and women going out from our Sunday schools to their chosen fields of labor imbued with the idea that this is God's world, that God loves every inhabitant of the globe, that every man is a brother, that he himself dare not rest content unless he is doing his best to give every man as fair a chance as he has, then we can feel that as religious educators we have not labored in vain. When that day comes there will be a no less amount of vital personal experience, no unreadiness to help the man next door; on the contrary, the world ideal will sharpen the community responsibility and make Christ very real to the individual heart.

Sunday school leaders should get the world in the focus of their thought. Every child in every Sunday school should be set in growing relation to that great ideal. All religious educational principles, all methods of instruction and organization, should be measured and justified by their power to conduce Christian fraternity to all humanity.

III

MAKING A STATISTICAL
ENROLLMENT OF THE
SCHOOL

A COMPLETE and accurate enrollment of the pupils stands out as one of the improvements of the new Sunday school over the old. There was a time when the pupil's name on a class book was all the record the school had of that pupil. At most the new pupil was asked, "What is your name?" "Where do you live?" and perhaps, "How old are you?" The public school has never fared forth with any pupil on such meager information, nor should the Sunday school attempt to do so. By its general and vague methods the Sunday school has lost the individual in the mass: one boy is the same as another, and so long as he

adds one and fills a place why inquire further? Numbers, rallies, spectacles—these have been the centers of interest and the measures of success. The institutional end has received the emphasis: we are just learning to attend to the personal end of Sunday school life. It is fast becoming a maxim that the only way to help boys and girls is to understand them. No two pupils are alike in inheritance, training, or environment. Just what the facts in the life of any pupil are must be known by the earnest Sunday school and the real teacher. The boys and girls must be individualized. The best time for securing the life-facts of any pupil is that when he enters the school. At the very least the information required of each pupil should include the following points: name, address, age, public school standing or educational attainment, baptized or no, church member or no, previous Sunday school experience, eyesight and hearing, special talents, par-

ents' names and church relationships, father's occupation. According to these facts the pupil should be classified and dealt with. The teacher should be in possession of these facts. The statistical enrollment cards should be placed on file, alphabetically indexed, and accessible to all workers concerned at any time, and above all to the pastor of the church.

As a pupil is promoted or experiences other changes affecting his religious development, careful account should be kept on his statistical card.

If a school has no such statistical enrollment of its present membership, such data should be secured by the teachers from their pupils on a Sunday set for that purpose. Blanks and permanent cards should be prepared by each school. A special officer, enrollment secretary or registrar, should be elected to take care of the enrollment file, keeping it up to date and furnishing information on any pupil at any

time to anyone desiring same. The enrollment secretary will be able to give the total enrollment of the school at any time. If any pupils move away or drop out of Sunday school, such facts should be noted on the enrollment cards and those cards removed to a separate file. The religious history of any pupil, his promotions and progress, could be written up at any time from his card.

The chief benefit from such a thoroughgoing survey and record will become apparent in the crises of the lives of the pupils. One arrives at the time of decision and requires very careful direction and advice: the special experiences of that life will determine the nature of the counsel and prevent tragic blunders. A testimonial is requested by some person or firm to whom application has been made for employment: such can be intelligently given from the record. A pupil has gone wrong, and you may be led to an understanding of the case, and to sympathy and to accep-

table and genuine helpfulness because you can retrace the life-channel from the experience enrollment card. And in very many ways a careful statistical enrollment individualizes the pupils of a school and makes adaptable treatment possible.

IV

CLASSIFYING AND GROUP-
ING THE PUPILS

As far as it is possible each class in the Sunday school should be a unit. The labor of discipline is reduced to a minimum when the pupils are divided into homogeneous groups. Troubles come in when you ask one teacher to manage pupils who are far apart in interests and development. The haphazard method of grouping Sunday school pupils in the past has led to a deal of difficulty, discouraged many a promising teacher, and given pupils an altogether erroneous conception of a Sunday school. New pupils have been allowed to go with their chums or to a class where they know somebody; this class has contained pupils six years apart in age and divided by as many

school grades, regardless of the laws of grading. Such pupils do not live in the same world, and no teacher can hope to minister to all the members of such a dissimilar group.

To-day the age of the pupil may have to be the general basis of classification in most Sunday schools, but as soon as the time comes when the Sunday school is regarded as a real school, subject to educational laws, the criterion of classification may be the degree of mental and spiritual development. As it is now the public school grade may be taken as one of the factors, along with age, for determining the Sunday school grade. Right here the value of the statistical enrollment will be seen; the first step in the reorganization and reclassification of the pupils of any school must be the securing of the facts which are to form the basis of grading. This is one of the purposes of the school survey.

Many schools will need to be almost completely broken up and reconstructed

before any series of Graded Lessons can be introduced and successfully operated. It will be like organizing a new school. Here are the pupils of all sorts and sizes: classify them according to educational laws, irrespective of how they have been previously grouped, and you will have placed the school on a solid foundation for educational and evangelistic efficiency.

These rules are particularly applicable in the Elementary Division of the school, up to and including the Junior Department. In the Intermediate and Senior Departments of the school some regard must be had for voluntary and natural groupings: this is the natural time for the gang and the club, as well as for self-management, and nothing should be imposed arbitrarily upon the pupils. But where no strong natural grouping already obtains the laws of age and development should be thoroughly enforced in arranging the pupils in classes.

Generally speaking, classes are too large in Sunday school. Individual work is the ideal way in religious education: seeing that this is impossible, because of the dearth of teachers, it should be approached as nearly as possible. If a class is to be a unit, the pupils as nearly alike as possible, in instincts and interests, it must necessarily be small. Barring the circle of the Beginners' Department and the lecture class of the Adult Department, no class should exceed ten in number, and in the Primary and Junior Departments six should be the maximum number in any class.

For worship purposes the Sunday school groups may safely be larger than for study purposes. The community of feeling is broader than the community of thought. And yet grave mistakes are still being made by endeavoring to span too great a length of life in the Sunday school worship services (the so-called "opening exercises"). Songs, prayers, and responses must be intelli-

gible if they are to be interesting; they must be interesting if they are to be helpful. The massed school may be a stirring sight to an onlooker, but it is a positive waste of time and a spiritual hindrance to those on the inside, especially to the most important members of the school, namely, those of the Elementary Division.

In larger schools there should be as many assemblies for worship as there are standard departments: Beginners' (four and five years), Primary (six, seven and eight), Junior (nine, ten and eleven), Intermediate (twelve, thirteen and fourteen), Senior (fifteen, sixteen and seventeen), Young People's (eighteen to twenty-four), Adult (twenty-five and on). In rural schools, no matter how small, the laws of the unfolding life demand four worship groups, namely, Beginners, Primary, Junior, and Senior (including all pupils above twelve). If these groups have to be reduced to three, place the Beginners

and the Primary children together. For drill purposes the Junior children should worship by themselves.

Reclassifying and redepartmentalizing the pupils of a Sunday school is an important business and should have the most careful attention of the officers of the school. Each pupil must be considered by himself according to his enrollment data and classified according to the laws of his own life. Before the changes are actually made in school the new arrangement should be platted on paper or on a blackboard, with everything in readiness; all of the shifting should be done on a set day. Objections must be steadily overruled in the interests of future growth and efficiency.

V

REMODELING AND EQUIPPING THE BUILDING

IN very many of the church buildings at the present time it is wholly impossible to do departmental Sunday school work. There is the one-room church in the country and the Akron plan Sunday school in the towns and cities, neither of which as now ordered can be used for modern Sunday school work.

For the one-room building rolling partitions, curtains, or screens might be the best way out. None of these would necessarily interfere with the preaching facilities of the room: rolling partitions can be opened; curtains can be pushed back or with the poles and wires easily removed; screens can be carried aside. None of these partitions would be

sound-proof, but all would be sight-proof, and the chief detraction from study for boys and girls is what they see rather than what they hear. If such simple appliances as the above-mentioned cannot be used for department divisions, they can most certainly be used for the separation of classes; and this is of the greatest value. Recently I visited a one-room church in the country which had been fitted out with curtains, poles, and wires in order that better class work might be done, and when Sunday school was over and preaching time came, in two minutes curtains, poles, and wires were taken down by monitors and removed to a storeroom. They told me that the entire cost of the improvement, after the ladies had done their work on the curtains, was but eighteen dollars.

The Akron plan of building is wholly unsuited for Graded Lesson work, and, indeed, has very little to recommend it for the Uniform system if educational

efficiency is taken into account. What to do with an Akron plan building is a problem; but I would suggest the removal of all of the partitions until an open square or rectangular room is left, and then the dividing of that room with solid sound-proof partitions for department work, and sliding partitions for class work. Any good public school building will serve as a pattern for the new departmental arrangement. Usually the building can be made two-story and a cross partition run above and below, thus making four schoolrooms.

Very often a church would do wisely to build a schoolroom at the rear or by the side of the church building. On special days, such as Rally Day or Christmas, when there are special reasons for massing the members of the school, the church auditorium can be used for this purpose. The church auditorium can be used for adult worship and study purposes at all times.

Above all when new church buildings

are being constructed great care should be taken so that the religious educational facilities will be all they ought to be. An architect who understands this phase of the work should be secured. The counsel of the Sunday school specialists should be sought. It makes one heartsick to view the great number of traditional church buildings that are going up to-day without proper thought having been given to the natural spiritual interests of the children. A preacher wholly obsessed with the pulpit ideal, a building committee the members of which think only of the grown-ups and of architectural beauty, and a traditional ecclesiastical architect—one or all are to blame for the waste and the shortsightedness.

Just as public school architecture has pointed us many lessons, so has the sensible equipment of public schools opened our eyes. The Beginners' Department should be as homelike as possible, just as are the public kindergartens, with

small chairs, little work-tables, rug on the floor, burlap dado, adapted pictures of the best subjects and quality, etc. All rooms should be bright and with good ventilation. In all departments such educational accessories as blackboards, tables, or desks, maps, cabinets, etc., should be found and intelligently used. It is scarcely necessary to state that the equipment should be graded, determined by the pupils' interests and by the curriculum of study. Handwork cannot be left out of Sunday school to-day if efficiency is the watchword.

VI

INSTALLING AND CARRYING
ON THE GRADED LESSONS

GRADED Lessons do not need to be argued to-day as they did a few years ago: their success, where they have been given a fair trial, is sufficient justification for their use. No objector can stand before living results; and in every Sunday school where Graded Lessons, carefully installed and conscientiously worked, have displaced the old Uniform system more pupils have intelligently decided for Christ in a given time than ever before: the Bible material has become interesting, even popular, to all grades of children, and real Bible scholars are being trained in our schools.

Everything depends upon the manner of installation and use. Nothing of real

value can hope to win out when the way is blocked by ignorance or prejudice. The Graded Lessons have been thrown out from a few schools and been an indifferent success in others, because they were expected to make their own way. They have been highly recommended by some speaker or writer, and anxious superintendents or ambitious pastors have impulsively thrust the new lessons upon their schools, when they themselves, much less the startled teachers, have understood nothing of the mechanics or the genius of a graded system of instruction.

Before Graded Lessons are substituted for Uniform Lessons they should be thoroughly examined and approved by all teachers and officers concerned. A class, made up of these teachers and officers, should be organized weeks or even months before the change is made. This would be a teacher-training class, meeting once a week, under the guidance of the pastor, or some one who has

made a thorough study of the new system, for the purpose of mastering the new lesson plan. The underlying principles of the system, the pupils and teachers' textbooks, the aims of the entire series and of the several years, the matters of equipment, handwork, and homework, all should be thoroughly discussed in this class. Needless to say, the leader must be master of the curriculum and an enthusiast for Graded Lessons. The Graded Lesson books should be in the hands of the teachers well in advance of the time when the new lessons are to be introduced and the "Forewords" should be carefully read.

October the first is the beginning of the Sunday school year and the new lessons should be introduced at that time. All the preparation should lead up to that date. One of the most important elements of preparation is the grading or classifying of the pupils. Some schools have failed at this point. The paramount reason for Graded Lessons

is graded life, and unless the pupils are carefully grouped according to their periods of development, the lessons cannot be fitted to the pupils. See Chapter IV, "Classifying and Grouping the Pupils."

The teachers would do well to visit the parents of their pupils, acquainting them with the new lesson plans, assuring them of the purpose to do a higher grade of Sunday school work, and soliciting their cooperation for homework. If all of these directions are followed, the Graded Lessons are sure to win favor from the pupils on the very first Sunday, and much depends on this. "Well begun" is one of the great secrets of success for the Graded Lessons. If the way is carefully prepared, I have found no reason for not introducing at once the Graded Lessons throughout all grades, at any rate to the first-year Senior. If thoroughgoing preparation cannot be made, it is wise to introduce the Lessons gradually, say to the end of

the Junior Grades, and then let them grow through the Secondary Division of the school.

Every graded school should have a supervisor of instruction, who understands the Graded system in its entire sweep, and who stands ready to assist any perplexed teacher and to offer suggestions where such are needed. Also department councils should be held regularly for the discussion of problems in the department, and especially for curriculum problems. Interest in the graded work can be stimulated by having an Exhibit Room or an Exhibit Day, by which means the pupils' work can be displayed and the interest of parents stimulated.

I believe that educational rules should govern every Graded Sunday school; that promotions should be on the basis of work done, that quarterly reports should be rendered the parents, that certain tests should be given, etc. However, let it always be borne in mind that

religious education is for life, and whatsoever is without food-value for the soul has no legitimate place.

Preparation, Thoroughness, and Results, these are the three efficiency watchwords of the Graded Lessons.

VII

OFFICERING THE NEW
SCHOOL

THE new educational Sunday school requires all of the officers of the old school, and some additional. The duties of the officers formerly used will be somewhat altered: the new officers will, for the most part, have duties of an educational character.—An educational administration is just as essential as pedagogical instruction in the new school.

The chief officers of the old Sunday school were superintendent, secretary, treasurer, and librarian.

According to the old custom the superintendent was the presiding officer, the platform manager, of the school. It was his duty to conduct the so-called “opening exercises” of the

massed school: also he was expected to review the lesson from the platform for the entire school, and then conduct the "closing exercises." All this is changed in the new departmentalized school. The principals are the platform managers for all purposes for their respective departments; the superintendent has no rostrum now. The superintendent is never chosen for his platform ability but for his executive talents. He is the power back of the principals, the inspiration of all of his associates in office, the guardian angel looking after the highest welfare of the entire school. It has been said that the superintendent who organizes his school so as to reduce to a minimum the necessity of his own actual presence is a wise leader. The superintendent of the new Sunday school stands in about the same relation to his school and the corps of workers as the superintendent of a mercantile house or factory stands to his business and to his men—always present and ac-

quainted with every department of the business, though, perhaps, seldom seen.

The old-time Sunday school secretary had compassed his duties when he had ascertained, recorded, and announced the attendance and the collections for the day. He might possibly be asked occasionally for the aggregate attendance of the school, and for the average attendance for any given time. The new secretary is one who takes motion pictures of the school. He can reproduce the school on paper at any time; he can give comparative views of different departments of the school at any time, or comparative views of the same department for different times; he knows what views to exhibit before the school for purposes of stimulation, and what views to reserve for the Cabinet meeting to arrest attention on certain weak places in the school. Nothing is too small to escape the survey of this officer. He has a paper picture of every student and worker in the school;

his interest is not so much a human interest as it is a scientific interest; he is a realist, he never guesses; he can flash the school before you at a moment's notice; the ideal secretary will know more about the school than any other person in it.

The new secretary has his assistants who bring to him the material for his records and reports. He will need at least an enrollment secretary, an absentee secretary, an extension secretary, a birthday secretary, and secretaries for the several departments of the school. The undersecretaries must needs be as the general secretary, painstaking and thorough.

The treasurer of the Sunday school, if he enters into the educational spirit of the school, will find his duties greatly broadened. He will become the finance director of the school. His aim will be to develop intelligent giving, so that each child will give systematically and purposely. The envelope system should be introduced into the Sunday school,

not for the purpose of receiving more money, though more money will be received, but in order that the children may be trained in regular giving. It has been said that one generation of Sunday school pupils well trained in the grace of giving to the Lord's work will do away with most of the debts of churches and missionary boards.

The librarian of the Sunday school, according to the oldtime meaning of that phrase, is not needed in most schools to-day. Public libraries have sprung up in almost all cities and towns, and it is a principle of the new Sunday school movement not to duplicate welfare agencies but, rather, to cooperate with those already existing. Further Sunday school funds are not usually sufficient to make possible a library of books equal to that provided by public funds. The flabby character of many of the books in the old Sunday school libraries assures one that some of them would make better fuel for flames than

food for the growing mind. The librarian of the new Sunday school had better be given charge of a Workers' Library and of the Graded supplies. For the most efficient use of the Workers' Library see the chapter in this book on that subject. As custodian of the Graded Lesson books and other literature supplies for the school the librarian should keep accurate and complete record of all that comes in and all that goes out. A ledger account should be kept with every department of the school.

The leading new officers of the school will be the principals of the departments and the educational director of the school. The principals will serve in their respective departments in the same manner as the old superintendent did for the entire school. They must have some platform ability as well as administrative and executive power.

The educational director is comparatively a new officer in the Sunday

school, made necessary because of the educational transformation of the school. The new superintendent, as we have noted, must be a business man, a man of executive ability. It is a rare thing to find marked executive ability and specialized educational training in the same person. The superintendent must be a man with educational ideals and convictions, but he will need a companion-in-labor to actualize these ideals. Both superintendent and educational director will find sufficient work in the average school to keep them busy.

The educational director will be required to institute a training department in the Sunday school, to see to it that real and resultful teaching is being done, to examine all curricula of study and select the best for his school, to examine the pupils regularly—in brief, all of the specific educational interests of the school are his concern. In many places ministers should serve as educational directors in their schools. All

ministers should be capable by training of filling such a position. The writer regards this office as perhaps the most important duty of his crowded pastoral life, the strategy of the formational period and the permanency of results remembered.

The superintendent should be the supreme head of the Sunday school; the pastor his spiritual leader; the secretary his statistical director; the educational director his instruction manager; the treasurer his finance organizer. Each of these must needs be a leader himself, with several helpers according to need. Never be afraid of creating too many offices. A good summary administrative rule would be: A man for each distinct task, each man understanding clearly his field and keeping to it; all overhead men good leaders; all mediums having qualities for leading and following; all farthest hands with a disposition to obey orders to the minutest detail; a clear relay line from the

last man to the first. The administrative tree is a nervous system, more of an organism than an organization, the superintendent, the head of the school, feeling the school's climate all the while through his conscientious lieutenants.

VIII

TRAINING THE TEACHERS

THE proper time to train teachers is before they begin to teach. This is so not only that they may be prepared when they take up the work, but also because the psychological time for training is past when one reaches twenty years of age. During the years from fifteen to twenty the service instinct comes to its zenith, and with it a deep desire to be prepared for service. These are the natural years of apprenticeship and vocation-preparation in every line: unless we select our Sunday school teachers before they are twenty years of age, and train them for true teaching, we are bound to have a hit-and-miss sort of teaching.

“Where there is no vision the peo-

ple perish." In no sphere is this more true than in the sphere of Sunday school activity. Except we idealize our school two or three years ahead, and begin now to make that ideal possible, we shall make no progress. Mere Sunday-to-Sunday work will never lift any school to a level of efficiency. If we had begun resolutely three years ago to build good schools and persisted unswervingly, instead of planning for the next Sunday merely, we should have real schools now. No get-rich-quick method will suffice in religious educational work.

From the pupils fifteen to twenty years of age, the upper Intermediate and Senior grades, all of the pupils with teaching promise should be selected and placed in a normal or training class. The committee of selection should consist of the teachers for those grades, the pastor of the church, the superintendent of the school and the educational director. Some of the qualities looked

for should be: Christian experience, leadership, love for children, interest in Sunday school work, the faculty of expression. It would be well to have a personal talk with each young man and woman elected for training work, stating the purpose of the committee, pushing back the sky line of the pupil, and seeking to deepen interest and loyalty.

This training class, or these training classes (according to the size of the school), will meet during the Sunday school session, an integral part of the regular school. The teacher for the training class must be very carefully selected—he is working for to-morrow, and his life and teaching will be manifolded through the years. The qualities required in the prospective teachers should be his in ripened form. I think we can afford to rob the working staff at any point for a teacher here; this is the strategic center, the potential fulcrum of the future school and church. The pastor could not cast his bread

upon more promising waters than right here. But he must not preach in this class. Here are young men and women to be developed from within, not built up by external applications of eloquence. Many a training class has been smothered; what is needed is light and air and exercise. Do not endeavor to cover so many pages in so much time; seek expression, encourage thought, insist on thoroughgoing assimilation. We are not building houses for show, but training souls to find themselves in God so that they can charge other lives with the Life Wonderful. There is no greater business.

For a curriculum of study for the training class consult the Advanced Standard Courses of the denomination. The best is none too good, students and purpose considered.

Training is not fulfilled out of a textbook. Practice work, observation of the best classes and schools—these should be included in any schedule of training.

The practice work should be done under observation and kindly criticism, as in a State normal. Serving as assistant teacher for a time gives one confidence and a sense of the realness of the work. Observation work is good, and should be done with pencil and notebook, and discussed in class afterward. The visit of the class to a well-organized school will stiffen purpose and clarify ideals.

On training of the present workers, see Chapter IX, "Sunday School Workers' Night." But let it be remembered that the training of future workers is the prophetic and the statesman-like thing. All training is greatly worth while and can scarcely be overdone. Correspondence courses are of immense value. However, if all Sunday schools would institute training classes to-day right in their schools, to-morrow we would have plenty of teachers with clear aims and efficient methods.

IX

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS'
NIGHT

It is not too much to expect Sunday school teachers and officers to come together once a week for training and conference work. The following has been the schedule for our Sunday School Workers' Night: Supper, 6:00 to 6:45; Department Conferences, 6:45 to 7:30; General Training Work, 7:30 to 8:15.

The men, and the women who work, are requested to come directly from their work to the church for supper. The suppers are in charge of a committee, which committee divides the women workers into groups of three, and assigns to each group a night when they are to prepare the supper. Everything is purchased for the supper, nothing

donated or solicited: only the meat and vegetables are cooked at the church. The meal is a simple one, though substantial enough to satisfy the men who work hard. We have discovered that an adequate meal can be furnished for fifteen cents apiece: each one adds a penny to pay the dishwasher. All the workers in the Sunday school are expected to be present for supper, and, unless notice to the contrary is given well in advance to the chairman of the supper committee, a plate is set and the price expected. By similar notification any worker may bring a friend or another member of the family with him.

The workers sit at table by departments and matters of department interest are informally discussed while eating. Promptly at 6:45 the workers retire to their respective department rooms for council work. The principals of the departments have charge of these councils. A definite program is worked

out and the laws of unity and continuity observed in the work of any one season. Sometimes the principals use a text, such as Dr. Athearn's Church School, or the proper volume of The Worker and His Work series: again the courses suggested by the Sunday school magazines are followed: sometimes the Graded Work for the department furnishes the basis of study. The thing to be guarded against is drivel and aimlessness. Everything depends upon the principal for a successful council.

During the conference period the superintendent of the school meets his assistants and all general officers of the school. The administrative and executive aspects of the work are clearly defined and thoroughly discussed. Each officer comes to know definitely what his specific task is, the policies of the school are clearly set forth, and the records and reports are examined and the weak places in the school sifted out for improvement. The helpfulness of these

Cabinet meetings depends upon the superintendent.

All of the workers come together at 7:30. The pastor has charge of the general training work, and the fundamentals of religious education make up the groundwork of study for this period. Before anyone can become a specialist in Sunday school work he must have the large view of unity and ultimate aim in religious education. The curriculum for this period over a number of seasons should include the following subjects at the very least: systematic Bible study, the psychology of the growing life, religious pedagogy, and educational organization. The Advanced Standard Courses of the different denominations can very safely be followed in this general training work. Parents from the homes, earnest-minded young people in the school, and eager men and women of the congregation, will be glad to join this general class. Thus Sunday school sentiment will be spread and

workers trained in advance. For one cannot pass through a hearty course in the methods and principles of Sunday school work without developing an appetite for Sunday school work.

X

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
WORKERS' LIBRARY

I HAVE found that it is not a difficult matter to secure to a church a good Sunday School Workers' Library. A "Book Shower" from the members of the church and congregation will be heartily indorsed and generously entered into. The way should be prepared by the arousal of interest in the latest and best methods of Sunday school work, and by the confident declaration that more safe and sane books on moral and religious education have been published in the last fifteen years than altogether before. Lists of these books should be prepared and manifolded for congregation distribution. The specialists should be consulted for

the books on these lists and their advice followed. After such lists have been distributed throughout the congregation the members thereof should be given the privilege of marking the book which they would most like to see in a Workers' Library and which they would be willing to purchase. Second and third choices should be made so as to make duplications as few as possible. After the books have been purchased the donor's name should be written in each book; he should have the first read of it, and then it should become the property of the church.

It will always happen that some people will trust the judgment of the pastor, or one of the educational leaders, rather than their own in the choice of books. Such will simply give the money and allow others to make the selection. In this way books with dull titles, or books on unpopular, though very essential, themes can be purchased.

The first purchase may not exceed

one hundred books; in a small church the number may be even fewer than this. But in any case the nucleus of a splendid library can be formed. The soundness and quality of the books should always be considered before the number. Well-meaning friends will wish to add volumes from their outworn library, but such an action should very seldom be allowed.

A waiting list of books should always remain posted in plain sight of all churchgoers. As new books are written by the masters the names of these books should be added to the waiting list. The fact should be kept before the people that anyone may make a contribution of any book on this waiting list at any time. In this way the library will grow and be kept up to date.

The wise and efficient use of the volumes in the library is just as important as the selection and furnishing of them. To begin with, the library should be in a conspicuous and convenient place, both

for contributors and Sunday school workers. It should be plainly labeled, "Sunday School Workers' Library." A librarian with a deep sense of the value of Sunday school work, and with a conviction of the possibility of self-training; one who is fairly familiar with the contents of the books, or will work to make himself so, should be secured. The usual library rules should be insisted upon, or rules which will insure the greatest good to the greatest number. The workers should be encouraged to draw books according to their department of work. — In addition, books should be advised by the librarian, even handed out, according to the place and character of service. Furthermore, certain sections and chapters should be pointed out as specially valuable. When a book is returned the librarian should test the reader's grasp of its essential elements by a few well-ordered questions. He may deepen the impression made by the book, and enhance its

usefulness, by a few strong supplemental remarks thereupon. A brief outline of the fundamentals of any book might be submitted in writing and such outline carefully examined and commented upon. An account should be kept with each worker as to how much he has read and how well he has assimilated what he has read. Such a record will prove of immense value in guiding to a choice of leaders for the school.

Trained workers is the outstanding need of most church schools to-day. The local Workers' Library, efficiently handled, will help to make a seemingly impossible need an actual fact. Carlyle said, "The best university I know is a shelf of books."

If it seems wise, and local conditions warrant, the Workers' Library can be made a Church Workers' Library, for workers in every department of the church, for trained workers are greatly needed everywhere.

XI

REORGANIZING THE ADULT
DEPARTMENT

THE Adult Department of the Sunday school is still a comparatively new institution. A few years ago the only adults in the school of the church were the members of the administrative and teaching force, and, in some schools, a Bible class made up of the old saints who loved the church and who coveted an opportunity to argue or testify concerning the faith which was in them. But quite recently the church awakened to the following facts: the class meeting was dying out, adult Christians were disgracefully ignorant concerning the Bible, the Sunday school by its very genius could be made to minister to the fellowship and scriptural needs of men

and women. So adult classes in the Sunday school have been strongly advocated and enthusiastically promoted in the last few years.

It may be that nothing else but the factors of enthusiasm and entertainment would have been sufficient to give adult Sunday school work advertising and momentum at the outset. However that may be, it is certain that large classes and good times have been the outstanding characteristics of this Christian adult movement. The largest class in the world has been cited as the model class. It may be truthfully said also that in many cases the activities have been of a selfish nature, oyster suppers, contests for membership and the like occupying the focus of attention.

The time has come for a change from mob devices and superficial methods to something more substantial. That the Adult Department is a department in a school must be granted, and because it

is a part of a school it must conform to some educational principles. Not that there shall be less genuine enthusiasm and sociability, or less real service, but that there shall be more true teaching and training for service.

To begin with, if at all possible, the adults should assemble by themselves for their "opening exercises": this is more in the interests of the remainder of the school than for the sake of the adults. In many cases the church auditorium is the logical place of assembly for the adult classes of the Sunday school. The worship exercises should be brief; the adults should worship in the regular preaching services. Adults come to Sunday school for study purposes; not for another worship hour.

But the greatest changes in adult Sunday school work are coming along the line of smaller study groups and better courses of study. The large classes are being broken up; the department is being graded. Many types of

men and women are to be found in every thriving Sunday school. Those with similar interests should be grouped together for study purposes. Age and vocation will be two of the bases of grading. Those in their twenties cannot profitably and agreeably study and fellowship with those over forty years of age; nor those over forty with those who are more than sixty. The unmarried, the newly-weds, and the long-married all represent widely divergent classes with varying needs and desires. Hand-workers and brain-workers do not usually mingle together with ease and comfort. A man's Sunday school class must be made up of men like himself if he is to feel at home, and he must feel at home to enter into the common life of the class. The department will provide opportunity for the free play of the crowd psychology of the former great classes: but always the class must furnish the material to feed mind and heart.

The Adult Department of any Sun-

day school should aim to minister to all of the life-needs and all of the legitimate desires—social, intellectual, spiritual—of every person in its constituency, provided those needs are not supplied by some other wholesome agency in the community. So far as curriculum is concerned a comprehensive list of studies should be drawn up and submitted to the members, and possible members, of the department. Every adult member in the church should be canvassed with a schedule of study and service opportunities. All courses must be freely elective, for we are now dealing with those of mature judgment. Given a properly diversified curriculum and an opportunity to elect the course of their choice, the adults will grade themselves. And many who are in the worship service of the church, but out of the Sunday school, and many in the community but away from the church altogether, will make their way into the educational department of the church

because there they can find their needs squarely met in a class after their own hearts and minds.

The following are the classes and courses offered in the Adult Department of our Sunday school at present: A Young Man's Class, studying second-year Senior Graded Lessons; a companion Young Ladies' Class; a Homebuilders' Class, studying the Mother's Magazine and quarterly; a Temperance Workers' Class, using as text "The Liquor Problem," by Norman E. Richardson; a Mission Study Class, alternating Home and Foreign texts; a Teacher Training Class, using the Advanced Standard Course; A Social Service Class, studying The Social Creed of the Churches, by Harry F. Ward; a Men's Brotherhood Class, a Woman's Organized Class, and a mixed class, all fellowship classes, studying the Uniform Lessons. We have found that the smaller group system, with free election of studies, works, making a more

universal appeal, greatly increasing the enrollment of the department and the regularity of attendance, and in many ways securing constructive and permanent results.

XII

EMPHASIZING EXPRESSIONAL LESSON WORK

AN earnest Sunday school teacher asked me this question not long since, "How can I get my pupils to *do* the lesson?" A very pertinent question! The old-time Sunday school teachers considered that teaching consisted of the teacher's talking or preaching. Teaching and preaching are radically different: teaching is getting a lesson into a pupil's life; preaching is pouring a message out of a preacher. It is very seldom that a lesson can be talked into the mind of a student. It must be worked in by the pupil himself. Hands, feet, lips, heart, mind—very often all of these must be exercised before a lesson really becomes a part of the pupil's life. The lesson must be done or expressed.

Expressional work on the part of the pupil may be verbal, manual, or vital. Verbal expressional work is the easiest to secure in the Sunday school, and of great importance. It requires no material equipment, the pupils' minds and tongues are all. The former teacher was judged according to her fluency; the new Sunday school teacher is judged according to her ability to get her pupils to talk. When a pupil is sitting quietly you cannot be sure that he is listening and thinking on the lesson; when he is asking questions, or talking to the proposed point, you can be very sure he is thinking; and if he is thinking, the lesson is going home. Even the Beginners' and Primary children should be called upon to retell their stories: the Junior pupils should rehearse again and again the Bible facts which have been presented to them, for this is the drill and memory period of growing life: the teen-age students should have their minds so stirred by questions and

propositions which are vital to them, that they will just have to talk back. Let the teacher whose pupils put up a storm of questions and arguments on the subjects she has thrown out be greatly encouraged; let the teacher whose eloquence deluges the class study to be quiet, and study to stimulate to expression the sleeping minds of her pupils.

The Graded Lessons recommend themselves above the Uniform Lessons because they are all paralleled with handwork. Handwork is pedagogical for the reason stated above—it gives the pupils opportunity to take a hand in the lessons. The magazine that has proven the greatest boon to parents and children alike in the last two or three years is *Something to Do*. This magazine is not a mere busy-work book for the children; it is an educator. Likewise handwork in the Sunday school is a sound educational method.

Many teachers are perplexed about

getting the Graded Lesson handwork done as homework. Homework in connection with the Sunday school is something new. This I will say, the handwork should be done; if it really cannot be done at home, have it done at Sunday school. You will never be more truly teaching than when your pupils are work on the lesson. However, it has been my experience that when parents have been visited by the teacher and their cooperation in homework promised, and when the lesson fits the pupil's stage of life so as to become a real interest, no difficulty is experienced with homework. All homework should be carefully examined by the teacher and praise given where praise is due. Public exhibits of conscientious handwork should be held from time to time. The pupils are going to place the same estimate upon handwork as do teachers and parents.

By vital expressional work I mean a reproducing of the lesson in actual life.

There has always been a subconscious feeling on the part of sincere Sunday school teachers that pupils should pass from the abstractions of the class room to the realities of life with the lesson of the day. I have known teachers who habitually took their pupils to visit the sick after Sunday school. The new Sunday school transcends the old in making provision for systematic, adapted, social service paralleling the lessons of the classroom. The Sunday school should stand in its community as a great benefactor, reaching out an hundred hands of blessing. These hands should be the hands of the pupils. No pupil, not even the youngest, should be missed in this community service privilege. In connection with the missionary lessons, opportunities of world-wide service should be actually offered, such as educating a boy or girl in one of our mission schools, or supporting a native Christian worker in a foreign country.

The home church, the immediate

neighborhood, the larger municipality, the State, the entire home field, the world—all these have needs which growing children can help to supply, but the objective need is no greater than the subjective, the need of the unfolding life to have a field of service in order that he may learn the full meaning of the abundant Christian life. We have a selfish church to-day, a church of helpless drones, because the Sunday schools of yesterday were confined to the impressional side of religious education. True religious education includes expression, training for service, actual community and world service.

In connection with this subject I would like to recommend the following books published by the University of Chicago Press: *Handwork in Religious Education*, by Addie Grace Wardle; *Graded Social Service in the Sunday School*, by William Norman Hutchins.

XIII

SECURING DECISIONS FOR
CHRIST

DECISION DAY has been pretty much displaced by Declaration Day. Declaration Day is a day when those pupils who have decided to live Christian lives make open acknowledgment of that fact. It may be that on this day a few pupils will take the last step of Decision, but, for the most part, only the public confession remains for this day.

The whole school should not be massed for this day, only those twelve years of age and over. The year twelve is the psychological time of choice, generally speaking. Of course there are variations from this rule because we are dealing with living souls, and these are never sure material for the scientist as

physical things are. But the natural issue of personal choice may be looked for in the normal unfolding life just before the teen time. This is not different in the religious life from what happens in other phases of the life of the awakening mind. The day when each soul will claim the title deed for his own life may be expected at any time near twelve. The Graded Lessons are prepared with a view to the great choice at the end of the Junior age.

Children below twelve should not be admitted to a Decision or Declaration Day service, because God has not yet prepared them for such a time. Little children will answer to any Christian call because of their goodness, and because others do it, but they are not choosing, just simply obeying and following. Little children belong to Christ, but they are not moral Christians because they cannot yet reflect on the good and the evil, compare moral issues, and intelligently make a choice.

Nearly all evangelists make tragic blunders here, staging moral dramas before tender souls, attempting to force personal decisions before God's time, and retrenching future spiritual possibilities.

It is true that some boys and girls have precocious religious experiences; they come to the Great Divide before twelve. But such are the exceptions and should be dealt with individually.

All members of the school who are more than twelve years of age should be present on Decision or Declaration Day. It is to be hoped that most of them will have decided the great question, but it will confirm their own decisions to face the issue again. And those who passed the natural time of conscious conversion (for I believe this age of twelve or thereabouts to be that), cannot have the issue put before them too strongly now; life is fast setting, and God must be given a place now or the chances are strong for a godless life.

The teachers are the logical and legitimate evangelists of the Sunday school, each to the members of his own class. Why should Sunday school teachers forsake their posts or relinquish their rights when the objective of all their work slips into the focus? Here is the reason why every teacher should be a student of child psychology, in order that he may know how and when to take advantage of the developing instincts and the psychological moments. After the natural time of conversion has passed, each teacher should know positively how many of his pupils are Christians and how many are not. Those who are not Christians should be made the subjects of earnest prayer on the teacher's part; this prayer should be followed by personal work of a strong and definite character. The class work should be distinctively religious, but the pointed, personal questions should be in private. Every teacher could lead every pupil to Christ at the proper time

if he would meet each pupil in some private place, preferably his home or the pupil's, and be honest, frank, and persistent. Then on Declaration Day the pupils will strengthen their case by a public acknowledgment of the fact that Christ has been accepted.

Here is the highest kind of all-the-year-round evangelism. Not every lesson, even in the strategic years, should be specifically evangelistic or receive an evangelistic interpretation, but the teacher in these critical years must harbor an evangelistic spirit and be alert for every sign of spiritual awakening. To expect that on some certain day, Decision Day, by some magnetic and contagious performance an evangelistic atmosphere conducive to easy decision for Christ can be generated is to defy God's laws and cut off effect from cause. A professional revivalist has no business in a Sunday school.

XIV

MAKING THE SUNDAY
SCHOOL THE CHURCH
SCHOOL

THE Sunday school of the last generation had little more than a wooden connection with the church; it convened in the same building as the adult worshipers, sometimes in the same room. The early Sunday school, instituted by Robert Raikes in 1780 in England, did not have even this place connection. From the beginning the church in America loosely adopted the Sunday school, but American churches have yet to learn that the Sunday school is an integral part of the church, with just as much right to be called "the church" as any other assemblage of people in the building, or any other branch of this Christian organism.

Just what, in reality, is the church in

any local community? We are not speaking of the building but of the organization of people which meets in the church building. Is it not true that we are accustomed to think of the adults assembled for worship in the preaching service as the church? Father and mother go to church; the children go to Sunday school. Is it any wonder that the children grow up with the impression that they are not connected in any way with the real church, that they are only temporarily connected with a school that meets on the same day and in the same building as the church? Is it any wonder that the Sunday school exit is outdoors rather than into the preaching service? Is it any wonder that young men and women have only a Sunday school bond to break when they leave Sunday school? The church leaders have not conceived the Sunday school as an organic part of the church; and children inevitably inherit the conceptions of their seniors.

The truth of the matter is that no department of the church is the entire church; or it might be nearer to the point to say that every department is the church. Very generally speaking, the functions and departments of the church may be divided into three classes: the inspirational—worship, or preaching service; the expressional—active or serving department (Ladies' Aid, Missionary Societies, etc.); and the educational, or school department. Just as well call the trunk of the tree, the tree, and the root and the branches something else, as to call the worship service of the church the church, and the educational and expressional departments something else. In my judgment the child on his way to the so-called Sunday school is on his way to church just as much as his parents are going to church when preparing for the preaching service. In the newer and truer sense the school is the church at study upon the Word of God.

The name Sunday school should be changed to "Church school." Some leading religious educators have already adopted this term and all church people, in the interests of truth and economy, should speedily follow. You may say, "What's in a name?" I reply, "Very much to the growing mind hearing names and forming notions for the first time."

The term "Sunday school" makes the day of meeting the essential thing; the day of meeting is but an incident. The essential idea is that here is a great mother institution, the church, with many arms of blessing, and one, the arm of religious educational provision, and when the child is enfolded there he is already in the bosom of mother church. As he develops and so desires, he may be encircled by other arms of this great mother, and accept new vows and obligations, but from the time he feels the first embrace of the church (it may be as a member of the Cradle Roll Depart-

ment of the Sunday school), he is in the church, even as a son in the family, bearing the family name to his own pride and honor. A little girl of the Beginners' Department of a Church school, passing the church building where she went on Sundays to that Beginners' Department, remarked, "That is my church." She was right, and officials would do well to give the educational department of the church the family name.

The governing board of each local church should regard the school of the church as its special ward. From this department come the heavy gains: here lies the hope of the future church. I know of one church where no one may sit on the official board unless he is regularly and actively engaged in the school of the church. Small likelihood of this board overlooking the interests of the educational department of the church, as is often done in churches where the board consists of the gran-

diose trustees, who must protect the building; and the honorable stewards, who must collect the pastor's salary—all of which pillars in the church could never think of stooping to work in the Sunday school. Know they not that the church school is the fountain-head of the church's life? Without the school to-day we'll need no church buildings to-morrow, and the call to the ministry will be forever silenced.

In our local church we have but one budget. The same envelopes will be used by the membership of both instructional and worship services, double envelopes to be deposited at either service, or in both, for those who desire to give. The pupils of the school have a part in the finance system, and in the great benevolent enterprises of the church. They do not give for themselves as formerly, but are trained in the fundamental principle of Christian giving, that of giving for Kingdom purposes. In turn the needs of the school are well

taken care of from this general treasury. I suppose the school more than pays for itself, but that question does not enter into the plan. The conviction is that the mother should provide for the child of the family, and that the child should be trained in unselfish giving. A common budget system in all local churches would aid in transforming the Sunday school into a church school.

A word here on the attendance of the children upon the preaching services might not be out of place. The preacher has no greater problem. His heart is troubled because the young people of the school will not remain for the preaching service. From the beginning of the habit-forming time, the Junior period, the children should be in the distinctively worship service. But they are not, and because they are not we are sowing for a future of nonchurchgoers. Where's the remedy? I believe, as has been argued here, if young people are made to feel that the whole church is

theirs, they would more often attend the preaching service. The new conception, giving rise to the new habit, cannot be inculcated in a day; but if adults would only get the idea of the church as "one body with many members," the school of the church an integral part of the church; if they would talk it and live it, the young people would soon take them at their word and claim their inheritance.

Of course the preaching service must minister to the interests of young people to hold them. It is unreasonable to expect anyone to continue a performance that means nothing to him merely for the sake of tradition or habit formation; much less can this be done with young people. The challenge is up to the preachers for the most part. Some of these preachers are bewailing the dearth of young people in their audiences when their sermons are "obsessed with adultism." I believe it is truly possible to conduct a worship service so that all

from the Junior period to the octogenarian class can be interested and edified. It will not mean a change of subject-matter so much as a change of spirit and presentation. Give the young people an active part in the service: draw illustrations from their fields. Ritual and ceremony make a strong appeal to young people. I know a boy who asks every Sunday morning if it is Lord's Supper Sunday; if it is, he wants to attend; if not, he does not care to go. Let the minister call back his own interests during these periods, let him study books on the characteristics of the unfolding life, let him mingle with young people during the week in real comrade fashion, and he will learn to be a "young folk's preacher." And withal he will discover that his adult hearers will appreciate the freshness and thrill of his sermons as never before.

Combination services, where the instruction period and the preaching service merge in a half hour of common wor-

ship between the two, seem to me to be wrong in principle; and if so, such service can never be permanently successful. It is a scheme, and you cannot continue to secure favorable reactions from the hearts of young people when you resort to schemes. Likewise I am doubtful about the wisdom and value of the so-called "Junior church"—a separate inspirational service for children from nine to twelve. Will it develop an appetite for the regular preaching service? I think not. The gap from a Junior church to the main worship service is just as difficult to span as that from the church school to the worship service.

The ideal plan is to expect young people from the age of nine—the time when habit-formation for life really sets in—to attend the regular preaching services; to make this the natural, normal, and habitual practice, by adults really believing it and never making any contrary suggestions to the young folks; to make the children feel that

they are a part of a great unitary functionalized institution, and that by virtue of age and development they will come to deeper privileges and rights in this their church home; to make every preaching service one of interest and inspiration to young folks by effecting a sure point of contact with their actual lives, and by giving them a significant part in the regular activities. All this is possible to that church and to that minister who believes it enough to make it so. The good old custom of the family pew in church cannot be improved upon; the ponderous adultism and the droning supernaturalism of some of the services of those other days can be greatly improved upon. If we cannot have the family pew to-day, let us have the class pew, in which a class from the instructional service of the church sits with its teacher. Make the Sunday school the church school and you will endow the young people with all the privileges and responsibilities of the church entire,

privileges and responsibilities which they will answer to as their capacities unfold. Young people have too fine a sensibility, and too much good sense, to be thrust into a traditionally exclusive meeting, theoretically and actually considered as distinct from their special assembly, the school, and staging a program, not only over their heads, but also quite foreign to their lives. But if they have received their title deed to the whole wealth of the church's provision when they enter the school of the church, they will march boldly forward through all her departments as those having property rights.

XV

SUPPLEMENTING THE SUNDAY INSTRUCTION

(THE GARY PLAN)

No sincere Sunday school teacher has ever had time for the lesson. Thirty minutes' time goes so rapidly for the teacher who is prepared and interested that she finds herself at the end of the study period with more lesson material untouched than she has covered. And she will never have the opportunity of presenting this subject-matter again, nor any subject-matter for seven whole days, and then again only for a brief half hour (and this may be cut down by special-day exercises, or by department business or by a visiting speech-maker). Thirty hours per week for study at the public school: thirty minutes at the Sun-

day school—the despair of conscientious Sunday school teachers everywhere is this pittance of time for lesson presentation.

The question is, How can this instruction time be increased? It might be somewhat lengthened on Sunday; indeed, in many schools where educational methods are being adopted, it is being lengthened. The Sunday school period lasts an hour and a half instead of one hour, as formerly, beginning earlier or lasting longer according to the time of the preaching service. Where the entire Sunday school program has to be crowded into one hour, less time is being taken for general exercises and more time for class study. This is as it should be, for, while all parts of the religious educational program are important, that which the pupils learn of God's Word is what is going to stay by them through the years, building them up in the Christian life and fortifying them against temptation. When the

Master was under the strain of temptation he quoted Scripture. Make the study-period just as long as possible in Sunday school.

But even with the study time stretched to the limit on Sunday it is still quite insufficient. Some churches have required the children's time after the public school day or on Saturday; some churches, more voluntary than the above, have requested such time. The churches of authority have done pretty well with this plan in past generations; it is not working so satisfactorily to-day: the American youth wants liberty in this generation. It is not difficult to get a class of boys or girls together for social or recreational purposes. It is a hard matter to assemble them between Sundays, out of public school hours, for Bible study work. Some teachers succeed in getting their pupils together for handwork in connection with the Graded Lessons, and this practice should be encouraged. However, what

is being done in this way is nothing more than a drop in the bucket, and there is little hope of teachers taking enough real and permanent interest to make this kind of between-Sunday work count for much.

I believe the church must have a fraction of the public school time if it is going to succeed in making its valuable contribution to the education of the American children. Further I believe the State is more willing than we think to grant to the church a small portion of time. The public, parents in particular, are beginning to feel that more time should be devoted to religious education, and that the children should be assembled for this purpose when they are fresh and up to the mark. The common judgment now is that religion (we are not speaking of Bible history and Bible literature) cannot ever be taught in our public schools—we are too diverse in creeds for that, and creeds sink deep. The American people have come

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to feel that the task of religious education is up to the churches, and that they ought to be given a fair chance to do their part.

A year ago the ministers of our town requested the local Board of Education to grant to each pupil the privilege of coming to the church of his or his parents' choice, for one hour each week for religious instruction. Petitions to this end were circulated through the several churches and almost unanimously signed. These petitions were put before the Board of Education, promptly honored, and the requested favor granted. The churches made preparation, by adding some equipment and engaging teachers, for conducting real schools in the churches. The pupils came in two shifts on Wednesday afternoons. Curricula of study were carefully worked out: these consisted of the expressional work of the Graded Lessons of the previous Sunday, of church and denominational history, and of

memory work of Scripture, hymns, and prayers. The results were very gratifying in every way: the pupils worked hard; the parents were amazed and pleased at the religious progress of their children; the town improved noticeably in atmosphere and attitude.

This year the three schools of the town are all Garyized, having shops, domestic science training, playground directors, etc. We still have our church schools, but our attendance is somewhat diminished because the pupils have to make the choice, in some instances, between the playground or the industrial department, and the church school. And boys are still boys and girls girls.

The ideal arrangement for a midweek church school is in conjunction with the traditional public school, where the choice is between the church school and supplemental work (not an integral part of the regular course) in the public school; of course the constitution of our country will not permit of the public

school authorities requiring any pupil to attend church school. But under any fair system the church school will be gratefully patronized; parents do not want the moral and religious interests of their children to suffer, no matter how negligent of these matters they themselves are.

Our midweek church school is under the same management as is our school on Sunday. The superintendent supervises the work of both; the educational director looks after the teachers and the courses of study; a principal is elected for this department of the religious educational work in the same way that a principal is elected for the Junior Department of the Sunday school. In the interests of economy and efficiency the policy of any church should be to keep all educational phases of the work under one central management.

It is not too much to expect that our children be granted at least one fresh hour per week for religious education;

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nor is it too much to expect the church to make provision for the most profitable use of this hour. I believe this to be the only solution for the problem of the lack of time for adequate religious instruction. Denominational boards should be consulted for courses of study and plans of organization.

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